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SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [RS](#) [GG](#)
SUBJECT: RUSSIA: "NEW" IDEAS, LOW HOPES FOR GEORGIA GENEVA
TALKS

Classified By: A/Political MC Eric Green, reasons 1.4 (b/d).

¶1. (C) Deputy Director of the MFA's Fourth European Department Aleksey Dvinyanin, who serves as assistant and advisor to DFM Karasin for Geneva-based talks to resolve Abkhazia/South Ossetia issues, told us January 15 that it is quite possible that Russia will table a new proposal at the next session (January 28). He explained that the "new" proposals are aimed at securing agreement to Russia's long-standing priority to get Georgia and its breakaway regions to sign non-use of force agreements with one another. While he would not be more specific, Dvinyanin claimed that the MFA's Legal Department has been reviewing "creative" steps whereby neither Georgia on one side, nor South Ossetia and Abkhazia on the other, would recognize each other, nor prejudice their present or future positions on the matter. Dvinyanin said MFA lawyers believe that there are precedents that support the procedures they have outlined.

¶2. (C) For at least the next round in Geneva, DFM Karasin will continue to lead the Russian delegation. If there is not much progress on the Russian proposals or in other areas, Dvinyanin said Russian representation may be downgraded in the future. He cited Karasin's heavy workload and his focus on other regions for which he has responsibility, including Central Asia, as demanding more attention than the South Caucasus.

¶3. (SBU) On its website, the MFA on January 21 published the following agenda for the Geneva Talks:

- signing of non-use of force agreements
- negative consequences of the 'double-standard policy' leading toward re-militarization of Georgia
- work of joint incident prevention and response mechanisms
- solve problem of detained and missing persons
- further OSCE and UN activities in region taking new realities into account
- Georgia's 'discriminatory' law "On Occupied Territories", which affects IDP return, humanitarian aid

¶4. (C) Comment: Dvinyanin's comments corroborate what we have heard elsewhere: namely, that in spite of occasional protests about what it decries as destabilizing Georgian actions, Russia is not concerned enough that the status quo could lead to resumption of conflict in the short term. Should the next round of Geneva talks produce no results, Russia may well be ready to devote less attention to diplomacy and more to economic cooperation and assistance, especially to Abkhazia as construction work begins in nearby Sochi in preparation for the 2014 Winter Olympics.
Beyrle